



Sequoia Granger, left, Max Pescherine and Charlotte Evelyn Williams in "Are You Listening?" a one-act in Leda Siskind's "The Surveillance Trilogy" at Theatre 40.

(Ed Krieger)

‘The Surveillance Trilogy’ at Theatre 40

The essentials: Playwright Leda Siskind’s evening of one-acts, directed by Amanda Conlon, commences with a touching two-hander between a closeted McCarthy-era professor who is more fearful of being outed as gay than he is of having his subversive associations revealed. The second play revolves around the mysterious internal injuries suffered by American diplomats stationed at the Cuban embassy in Havana, as a CIA doctor tries to convince one of the sufferers that her symptoms are psychosomatic. And lastly, a comically intrusive Alexa-like virtual assistant plays mind games on a colorfully unstable family.

Why this? Whether playfully or poignantly rendered, Siskind's characters share a pervasive and justifiable paranoia. The fearful professor and his yearning wife start things off on a serious note, yet Siskind also has a knack for the lighthearted, as demonstrated by her closing play's scathing sendup of our tech-dependent society. Most fascinating, however, is her rigorously fact-based account of the Havana Syndrome, ailments the State Department still attributes to "high-pitched crickets."

Details: Theatre 40, Reuben Cordova Theatre on the campus of Beverly Hills High School, 241 S. Moreno Drive., Beverly Hills. 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, 8 p.m. Mondays, through Oct. 14. \$35. (310) 364-0535. theatre40.org